

Madam President, I need to speak on the other amendment, on Senator VITTER's and my amendment.

I yield the floor for the purpose of the Senator from Hawaii.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. INOUE. Madam President, the debate suggests very strongly that there is much uncertainty in this amendment. Therefore, I move to table the amendment.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3144 WITHDRAWN

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 3144 be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The amendment is withdrawn.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I appreciate that very much. As when I announced this bill, I indicated we had two of our most senior Members managing it, with great experience, and here is an indication of what I was talking about. This is a time when these two men understand this bill more than anyone else, because they have managed it for so many years. I appreciate their management on this, and we hope to be drawing this bill to a close.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mr. REID. Madam President, one of the privileges I have as majority leader is the opportunity to welcome, on rare occasion, fellow legislators from various places. Today, we are fortunate to have legislators from the European Parliament who are here as part of a regular transatlantic legislative dialog. It is very important. This is a tradition that started in 1972 and has continued every year since.

The current delegation includes members of the Parliament from the newest European Union countries of Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, as well as from the founding members of Italy, France, the Netherlands, and Germany. We are pleased as well to see colleagues from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal, and Finland.

The European Parliament today has 727 members who sit in 9 different political groups, not by country, representing the entire political spectrum of Europe from left to right. They work

in more than 20 languages, representing 450 million people who elect the Parliament in free and democratic elections every 5 years.

It wasn't very long ago that some of these nations represented by our colleagues here today broke free from totalitarian communism. Now they are participating in the European Union as full and equal members, enjoying the benefits of growing market economies and stable democratic governments under the rule of law.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the names of our colleagues from the European Parliament.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

63rd EP/US Congress Interparliamentary Meeting, Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue (3-8 October 2007, Washington, DC and Nevada)

Mr. Evans Jonathan, Chairman, PPE-DE, United Kingdom; Mr. Hamon Benoît, Vice-Chairman, PSE, France; Mr. Belder Bastiaan, IND/DEM, Netherlands; Mr. Burke Colm, PPE-DE, Ireland; Mr. Cercas Alejandro, PSE, Spain; Ms. Cretu Corina, PSE, Romania; Mr. Crowley Brian, UEN, Ireland; Ms. Descamps Marie-Hélène, PPE-DE, France; Mr. Duchon Petr, PPE-DE, Czech Republic; Mr. Fatuzzo Carlo, PPE-DE, Italy; Mr. Giertych Maciej Marian, NI, Poland; Ms. Gomes Ana Maria, PSE, Portugal; Ms. Iacob-Ridzi Monica Maria, PPE-DE, Romania; Ms. In't Veld Sophie, ALDE, Netherlands; Ms. Jäättteenmäki Anneli, ALDE, Finland; Mr. Kuhne Helmut, PSE, Germany; Ms. Mikko Marianne, PSE, Estonia; Mr. Millán Mon Francisco José, PPE-DE, Spain; Mr. Nicholson James, PPE-DE, United Kingdom; Ms. Quisthoudt-Rowohl Godelieve, PPE-DE, Germany; Mr. Skinner Peter, PSE, United Kingdom; Mr. Tatarella Salvatore, UEN, Italy; Ms. Zdravkova Dushana Panayotova, PPE-DE, Bulgaria.

Mr. REID. I would advise Senators that our colleagues from the European Parliament are available now to meet on the floor for the next few minutes. I welcome them.

I would announce also, every time I meet a foreign dignitary, I say to them—because they go to Dallas and New York, Chicago, and L.A.—that they never go to Nevada. Well, tomorrow they are headed for Las Vegas.

RECESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:55 p.m., recessed until 5:04 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska).

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike G. Mullen, has made a statement to our American soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and their families. I was privileged to get a copy of this, and I think it is the type of letter every Member of the Senate should be allowed to read. So I ask unanimous consent it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

To America's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and your families, I am honored today to begin my term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As I do, allow me to thank you for your service at this critical time in our Nation's history.

Whether you serve in Baghdad or Bagram, Kabul or Kuwait—whether you find yourself at sea in the Pacific, flying support missions over Europe, on the ground in Africa, or working every day at stateside bases—you are making a difference and so is every person in your family. Your service matters. And I do not take it for granted.

The world is a dangerous place. The hundreds of thousands of you who have deployed since September 11th—many of you more than once—already know that. You've stood up to those dangers. You have lost friends to them. You may even have lost some of yourself to them. The dangers of this new and uncertain era have hit you and the people you love squarely in the gut. I will not lose sight of that.

Nor should any of us lose sight of the need to continue serving. The enemies we face, from radical jihadists to regional powers with nuclear ambitions, directly and irrefutably threaten our vital national interests. They threaten our very way of life.

You stand between these dangers and the American people. You are the sentinels of freedom. You signed up, took an oath, made a promise to defend something larger than yourselves. And then you went out and did it. I am grateful and honored, to be able to serve alongside you.

The law says my main job is to advise the President, the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council on issues of military readiness and capabilities. I will do that. But, I also see myself as your representative to those same leaders, an advocate for what matters to you and your families—your voice in the policies, programs, and processes that affect our National security. I will not forget the impact my decisions have on you.

I will remember that you, too, comprise a great generation of patriots, and that among you are combat veterans with battlefield experience that many at my level have never and will never endure. I will tap that experience. I want to make sure we learn from it.

I am not interested in planning to fight the last war, but neither am I interested in ignoring the valuable lessons we continue to learn from this one. It would be foolish to dismiss the knowledge you have gained. I will not do that.

I know the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are taking a toll on you and your families. They are taking a toll on our equipment, our systems, and our ability to train as well. I worry, quite frankly, that they are taking a toll on our readiness for other threats in other places.

But that does not mean our struggles there are not important. They most certainly are important. They are vital.

To the degree the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan contribute to or detract from a stable,